

Week Ending Friday, September 8, 2006

The President's Radio Address

September 2, 2006

Good morning. This week, I spoke to the American Legion in Salt Lake City. I thanked the military veterans for their lifetime of service to our country. And I gave them an update on the war that America is now fighting in defense of freedom in our time.

We're approaching the fifth anniversary of the September the 11th attacks—and since that day, we have taken the fight to the enemy. Yet this war is more than a military conflict; it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century. On one side are those who believe in freedom and moderation—the right of all people to speak, worship, and live in liberty. On the other side are those driven by tyranny and extremism—the right of a self-appointed few to impose their fanatical views on all the rest. We did not ask for this war, but we're answering history's call with confidence—and we will prevail.

We are using every element of national power to defeat the terrorists. First, we're staying on the offense against the terrorists, fighting them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. Second, we made it clear to all nations, if you harbor terrorists, you're as guilty as the terrorists; you're an enemy of the United States, and you will be held to account. And third, we have launched a bold new agenda to defeat the ideology of the enemy by supporting the forces of freedom and moderation in the Middle East and beyond.

A vital part of our strategy to defeat the terrorists is to help establish a democratic Iraq, which will be a beacon of liberty in the region and an ally in the global war on terror. The terrorists understand the threat a democratic Iraq poses to their cause, so they've been fighting a bloody campaign of sectarian violence which they hope will plunge that country into a civil war. Our commanders and diplomats on the ground believe that

Iraq has not descended into a civil war. They report that only a small number of Iraqis are engaged in sectarian violence, while the overwhelming majority want peace and a normal life in a unified country. America will stand with the Iraqi people as they protect their new freedom and build a democracy that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself.

Working side by side with Iraqi forces, we recently launched a major new campaign to end the security crisis in Baghdad. This operation is still in its early stages, yet the initial results are encouraging. The people of Baghdad are seeing their security forces in the streets, dealing a blow to criminals and terrorists. According to one military report, a Sunni man in a diverse Baghdad neighborhood said this about the Shi'a soldiers on patrol: "Their image has changed. Now you feel they are there to protect you." Over the coming weeks and months, the operation will expand throughout Baghdad until Iraq's democratic Government is in full control of the capital. This work is difficult and dangerous, but Iraqi forces are determined to succeed, and America is determined to help them.

Here at home, some politicians say that our best option is to pull out of Iraq, regardless of the situation on the ground. Many of these people are sincere and patriotic, but they could not be more wrong. If America were to pull out before Iraq can defend itself, the consequences would be disastrous. We would be handing Iraq over to the terrorists, giving them a base of operations and huge oil riches to fund their ambitions. And we know exactly where those ambitions lead. If we give up the fight in the streets of Baghdad, we will face the terrorists in the streets of our own cities. The security of the civilized world depends on victory in the war on terror, and that depends on victory in Iraq, so America will not leave until victory is achieved.

For all the debate, American policy in the Middle East comes down to a straightforward

choice: We can allow the Middle East to continue on the course that led to September the 11th, and a generation from now, our children will face a region dominated by terrorist states and radical dictators armed with nuclear weapons. Or we can stop that from happening by rallying the world to confront the ideology of hate, by supporting the forces of liberty and moderation in the region, and by helping give the people of the Middle East a future of hope. And that is the choice America has made.

The path to victory will be uphill and uneven, and it will require more patience and sacrifice from our Nation. Yet we can be confident of the outcome, because America will not waver and because the direction of history leads toward freedom.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:55 a.m. on August 31 at the Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City, UT, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 2. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 1 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on Labor Day in Piney Point, Maryland

September 4, 2006

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Happy Labor Day.

Audience members. Happy Labor Day.

The President. Yes, thanks. Listen, I'm thrilled that Michael invited me to come and visit with you this Labor Day. But this isn't the first time he invited me. [*Laughter*] He invited me for last year, and I committed. And then we had a terrible storm hit, and I hope you understood—understand why I needed to be there than up here last year.

Now he invited me again. And I couldn't wait to say yes and couldn't wait to come here. I must confess, Michael, I didn't realize how strong your facility—facilities are here. I wasn't sure what to expect, but this is a fantastic facility. It speaks to your leadership and the leadership and the importance of your union. And so here on Labor Day, I

say to the union members who are here, happy Labor Day, and thanks for supporting leadership that is progressive, smart, capable, and has your best interests at heart.

I'm proud to be here with the family members. Michael, thanks for inviting family members. As you know, I think family is an important part of life, and that—invite the family here—families here today was a smart thing to do. And I look forward to shaking as many hands as I can this morning.

Today on Labor Day, we honor those who work, and we honor those who work because, in so doing, we recognize that one of the reasons why we're the economic leader in the world is because of our workforce. And the fundamental question facing the country is, how do we continue to be the economic leader in the world? What do we do to make sure that when people look around the world next year and 10 years from now, they say, "The United States is still the most powerful economy in the world"? I think that's an important goal to have, because when we're the most powerful economy in the world, it means our people benefit. It means there's job opportunities. That's what we want. We want people working. We want people to realize their dreams.

And so the best thing to do is to keep progrowth economic policies in place as the first step to making sure we're the most powerful economy in the world. And I think that means keeping those taxes low, letting you keep more of your own money. See, when you have more money in your pocket, you get to spend the money. You get to make the decisions. And the fundamental question facing Government is, who best to spend your money, you or the Government? I believe you ought to do it.

So we ought to make the tax relief permanent. I like it when people are working for a living, having more after-tax money in their pocket. That's what I like. And I think that ought to be a policy of the United States Government. So to make sure that we're the economic leader of the world, we got to keep taxes low.

But we also got to do some other things that's smart, and it starts with making sure